



NEWS RELEASE

IDAHO WATER RESOURCE BOARD

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"ASK THE PLANNER" EVENT ON PROPOSED PLAN SET FOR MARCH 25 IN GRANGEVILLE

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Area residents with questions about the proposed South Fork Clearwater River Basin Plan will get a special chance to pose those questions directly to the lead planner on March 25 in Grangeville, the Idaho Water Resource Board announced today.

"Ask The Planner" sessions have been scheduled for 2-4 p.m. and 5-7 p.m. at the Grangeville Senior Citizen Center located on the County Truck Route between Idaho and North State Street in Grangeville.

Thomas Grant, lead Board planner on the South Fork Clearwater Basin Plan, will be there along with Dick Wyatt, Water Resource Board Member, to informally answer residents' questions about the plan. He will also have paper and CD-ROM copies of the proposed plan for residents who may want them.

"This is not a public hearing or even a formal public meeting. It's a chance for folks who may have questions or who have heard rumors about what the plan does or doesn't do to come by and get answers straight from Thomas, the lead planner who prepared the draft plan," said Scott Short, who heads the Board's Planning Section.

Planners say they have already encountered questions that deal with such issues as the impact of the plan on existing water rights or property rights. Other questions have come up about minimum stream flows the Board may pursue.

Public meetings are helpful, but Board officials say one-on-one sessions with the lead planner can provide individuals a much more informal environment in which to ask questions and get answers without having to do so in front of a crowd, Board officials said.

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A major change in the revised version of the original plan is that streams which were to be identified for “natural” designation outside of Wilderness areas will be changed to “recreation” designation. Also, the Board will consider changing the designation of streams that are in roadless areas to “natural” if the areas become official Wilderness in the future.

The revised plan describes and evaluates the water resources and related economic, cultural and natural resources of the basin, and their current uses. It also contains the Board’s recommendations for managing the water resources in the basin, and identifies stream reaches proposed for inclusion in the state’s protected rivers system. The plan further identifies stream reaches for which the Board will consider applying for minimum stream flows.

The public review process includes a 60-day comment period, an information meeting and a public hearing, as follows:

- The public review period will remain open through the close of business on Friday, April 23, 2004.
- A brief information meeting and a public hearing are scheduled for Thursday, April 1, 2004 in Grangeville at 7:00 p.m. also at the Grangeville Senior Citizens Center.

The plan is available for review on the Department of Water Resources home page at: www.idwr.state.id.us/waterboard/planning/SF%20Clearwater/draftplan.htm.

Electronic copies on CD and paper copies may also be requested by contacting Grant via email at tgrant@idwr.state.id.us or by calling him at (208) 327-7900.

The “Ask The Planner” sessions will be conducted in facilities that meet the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you require special accommodations to attend, participate in or understand the presented material, please let Grant know in advance so he can make special arrangements.